

Castle Secures Additional Funding for Critical Education, Health, Crime-Fighting, Community Programs in Continuing Resolution -- January 31, 2007

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- After fighting for almost a year to ensure critical education, health, and community programs are adequately funded, Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today supported the Fiscal Year 2007 Continuing Resolution to fund the federal government for the rest of FY07, which ends on September 30, 2007. The Continuing Resolution will be voted on by the Senate next week and President Bush is expected to sign it into law.

"While I strongly disagree with the process that got us to this point in terms of not allowing minority party input, overall I am satisfied with this legislation. From the time the budget was unveiled in March of last year, we have been working in a fiscally-responsible manner to increase funding for critical domestic programs, which were put on the chopping block indiscriminately. My colleagues and I were committed to protecting the neediest among us by preventing cuts in important community, health and education programs. I am pleased our efforts have worked and we need to build on these efforts in the upcoming budget discussion, which will kick off as soon as next week.

"Specifically, for Delaware, I believe these increases will help ensure our students are receiving the educational services they need and deserve, that our community health centers can continue to apply for expansion grants, protect our public housing authorities from cuts, and leading companies like DuPont can compete for innovative energy research grants," Castle said.

"Additionally, I will continue to work with the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that vital beach replenishment -- like that taking place at Bethany and South Bethany Beaches -- will continue on time and uninterrupted."

Castle has been leading the Republican Moderate effort in Congress to ensure domestic programs receive at least a 2 percent inflationary increase over Fiscal Year 2006, despite being cut by the Republican Majority last Congress. He has been successful in his efforts and the following programs received significant increases over FY 2006 funding levels, due to the Moderates' efforts:

EDUCATION:

- Higher Education -- A \$260 increase in the maximum Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$4,310.
- Disadvantaged Students -- A \$250 million increase for Title I Education funding, which is the cornerstone of the No Child Left Behind Act. This money is enough to provide full Title I services to 38,000 disadvantaged students across the country who are at risk of being left behind. The resolution provides that \$125 million of this increase will be targeted specifically to schools that need additional help in closing the achievement gap.
- Special Education -- A \$200 million increase for Grants to States for Special Education to help school districts better serve almost 7 million students with disabilities, and brings Congress closer to reaching its goal of funding 40 percent of the program.
- Low Income Children -- A \$104 million increase for the Head Start program, which serves low income children, for a

total of \$6.9 billion.

HEALTHCARE

- Medical Research -- A \$620 million increase for the National Institutes of Health to \$28.9 billion. That increase will allow NIH to award an additional 500 research grants to our nation's brightest biomedical scientists, in areas such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. It will also create a new \$40 million program to support innovative, thinking-outside-the-box research. And it looks to the future by providing \$91 million for grants to first-time investigators - our nation's next generation of biomedical researchers. The resolution includes \$69 million for the National Children's Study.

- Community Health Centers -- A \$207 million increase for Community Health Centers for a total of \$1.9 billion. \$25 million will provide additional funding to existing health centers in order to maintain critical services. There are four community health centers in Delaware who will be able to compete for grant funding.

- Medicare -- A \$52 million increase to the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services to prevent the shutting down of the 1-800-MEDICARE call centers for the final months of the fiscal year. These centers were created to help seniors understand their Medicare options, and have become even more important since the Medicare prescription benefit was instituted. Originally, 22 million calls were expected this year; because of the uncertainty with the prescription drug program, the estimate has expanded to 35 million calls, and existing funding to fully staff the centers is inadequate.

CRIME FIGHTING, HOUSING & OTHER PROGRAMS

- Local Law Enforcement and COPS Programs -- \$520 million for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, an increase of \$109 million and \$542 million for Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), an increase of \$70 million.

- Housing -- An increase of \$300 million for a total of \$3.8 billion for Public Housing Authorities. This increase will help blunt the cut for Delaware's Public Housing Authorities. Specifically, the Wilmington Housing Authority was slated for a reduction of \$673,269.00 from Fiscal Year 2006 funding levels. However, Castle's efforts helped reduce that shortfall to only \$200,397.00. Therefore, the Wilmington Housing Authority would receive \$5,757,907 under this legislation.

- Amtrak -- The bill would fund Amtrak at \$1.3 billion. As Chairman of the Passenger Rail Caucus, Castle led the effort to improve the safety and security of passenger rail by increasing funding for this critical transportation program above the Administration's initial budget request of \$900 million.

- Energy -- Research into new energy technologies, such as improved conversion of cellulosic biomass to biofuels will receive an increase of \$200 million for a total of \$3.8 billion. Additionally, \$1.5 billion, an increase of \$300 million is included to accelerate research and development activities for renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.

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